LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently amended)   A method for managing a plurality of attributes in association with a plurality of electronic documents and a plurality of attribute types, implemented by a computer system, where an attribute type can have a plurality of attributes, the attributes and the attribute types are ordered in a tree-structure hierarchy, a document can be assigned a plurality of attribute types at a same and/or different level in the hierarchy, a document can be assigned a plurality of attributes for one attribute type, the documents are stored in a first data storage, the attributes are stored in a second data storage, and the first data storage and the second data storage are logically separate and different, said method comprising the at least one of sequential, non-sequential and sequence-independent steps in the computer system of:

(A)   providing a group of a plurality of documents including at least one document;

(B)   providing at least one attribute type, having a plurality of attributes includingselecting a plurality of attributes at least one attributeto be associated with the at least one document; and

(B)   providing at least one document;

(C)   associating for each of the selected attributes, automatically tagging, in the first data storage, the documents in the group including the at least one document, with the at least onceach selected attribute, and determining at least one reference corresponding to the at least one document and with all attributes of all ancestors in the hierarchy of each selected attribute (D) associating at least one other document with the at least one attribute and determining at least one other reference corresponding to the at least one other document; and (E) storing, in the second data storage, respective

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references ~~the at least one reference and the at least one other reference~~ in association with ~~the at least one~~ each selected attribute and the ancestor attributes, for later retrieval of ~~the at least one document and the at least one other document~~ individual documents in the group, the respective references uniquely indicating respective individual documents in the first data storage,

    wherein a document is a data record including a plurality of fields,

    wherein the attribute and the attribute type can be different from the fields in the document and contents of the fields.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, ~~further comprising determining at least one~~ wherein providing the group of documents includes selecting the documents included in the group of documents responsive to a user, ~~the group including the at least one document and the at least one other document~~.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of organizing the group of documents, wherein the documents are sorted for visual presentation ~~organized~~ by ~~at least one of:~~ at least one field therein, wherein the at least one field is different from the attribute and attribute type ~~and at least one attribute and at least one attribute previously~~ associated therewith.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the group of documents omits a lapsed document.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of assigning ~~the~~ at least one of the documents ~~document~~ to at least one other group.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one document is at least one of: XML format, binary format, image data, audio data, an interpretive file, and video data.

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7. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising searching the second data storage for the at least one documentdocuments based on criteria including at least one of the at least one attributeattributes and the at least onea corresponding attribute type, and using the respective references in the second data storage to locate the documents in the first data storage.

8. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 7, further comprising accessing retrieving the at least one documentlocated documents from the first data storage from the at least one attribute and the at least one reference stored in association therewithbased on the respective references.

9. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 8, further comprising displaying information characterizing the at least one documentdocuments.

10. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one of the attributes attribute is associated with at least one user, the at least one document being accessible by a plurality of users including the at least one user, further comprising limiting access to the at least one attribute to the at least one user associated therewith.

11. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one attribute attributes further can includeincludes at least one of: a reference to a URL, a reference to an other file, and user-provided text.

12. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one document and the at least one other document are representative of at least one ofdocuments include: an invention disclosure document, a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a contract document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document.

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13. (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising preliminarily determining, for the ~~at least one~~ attribute ~~type~~types, the plurality of attributes ~~including the at least one attribute~~.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one attribute is~~attributes are selected from a plurality of attribute types representative of at least one of: a product and a service.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the plurality of attribute types further includes at least one of: an actor, a user entity, a current owner, and a project.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of exporting the tree structure hierarchy including the ~~at least one attribute~~attributes and the ~~plurality of~~attribute types.

19. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising utilizing the ~~at least one attribute~~attributes as criteria for at least one of searching, retrieving, reporting, and viewing the at least one document.

20. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 19, wherein the ~~at least one attribute is~~attributes can be utilized in combination with ~~at least one of~~: (i) ~~the~~ at least one of the attribute ~~type~~types, (ii) at least one sub-type of the at least one attribute type, (iii) a content of at least one field in the at least one document; (iv) a type of at least one field in the at least one document; and (vi) information derived from the at least one field in the at least one document.

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21. (Currently amended)   The method of claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one reference corresponds~~respective references correspond to the serial ~~number~~ numbers of the ~~at least one document~~respective documents.

22. (Currently amended)   A method for managing a plurality of attributes in association with a plurality of electronic documents and a plurality of attribute types, implemented by a computer system, where an attribute type can have a plurality of attributes, the attributes and the attribute types are ordered in a tree-structure hierarchy, a document can be assigned a plurality of attribute types at a same and/or different level in the hierarchy, a document can be assigned a plurality of attributes for one attribute type, the documents are stored in a first data storage, the attributes are stored in a second data storage, ad the first data storage and the second data storage are logically separate and different, said method comprising the at least one of sequential, non-sequential and sequence-independent steps in the computer system of:

     (A)   providing a group of a plurality of documents including at least one document;

     (B)   ~~providing at least one attribute type, having a plurality of attributes including at least one attribute~~selecting a plurality of attributes to be associated with the at least one document;

     ~~(B)   providing at least one document;~~

     (C)   ~~associating~~ for each of the selected attributes, automatically tagging, in the first data storage, the documents in the group including the at least one document, with ~~the at least one~~each selected attribute and with all attributes of all ancestors in the hierarchy of each selected attribute; and ~~, and determining at least one reference corresponding to the at least one document; (D)   associating at least one other~~

~~document with the at least one attribute and determining at least one other reference corresponding to the at least one other document; and~~ —(E)— storing, in the second data storage, respective references ~~the at least one reference and the at least one other reference~~ in association with ~~the at least one~~each selected attribute and the ancestor attributes, for later retrieval of ~~at least one of the at least one document and the at least one other document~~individual documents in the group, the respective references uniquely indicating respective individual documents in the first data storage; and

~~(F)~~(D) wherein the at least one document and the at least one other document are representative of at least one of: an invention disclosure document, a patent document, a trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a contract document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document,

wherein a document is a data record including a plurality of fields,

wherein the attribute and the attribute type can be different from the fields in the document and contents of the fields.

23. (Currently amended) The method of claim 22, ~~further comprising determining at least one~~ wherein providing the group of documents includes selecting the documents included in the group of documents responsive to a user~~, the group including the at least one document, wherein the group of documents omits a lapsed document~~.

24. (Currently amended) The method of claim 22, further comprising searching the second data storage for ~~the at least one document~~documents based on criteria including at least one of the ~~at least one attribute~~attributes and ~~the at least one~~a corresponding attribute type, and using the respective references in the second data storage to locate the documents in the first data storage.

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25. (Currently amended) The method of claim 22, wherein the ~~at least one attribute is~~ attributes are selected from a plurality of attribute types representative of at least one of: a product and a service.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently amended) The method of claim 22, further comprising utilizing the ~~at least one attribute~~ attributes as criteria for at least one of searching, retrieving, reporting, and viewing the at least one document.

28. (Currently amended) The method of claim 27, wherein the ~~at least one attribute is~~ attributes can be utilized in combination ~~with at least one of~~: (i) the ~~at least one~~ attribute ~~type~~ types, (ii) at least one sub-type of the at least one attribute type, (iii) a content of at least one field in the at least one document; (iv) a type of at least one field in the at least one document; and (vi) information derived from the at least one field in the at least one document.

29. (Currently amended) The method of claim 22, wherein the ~~at least one reference corresponds~~ respective references correspond to the serial ~~number~~ numbers of the ~~at least one document~~ respective documents.

30. (Currently amended) A computer program product, for use in managing a plurality of attributes in association with a plurality of electronic documents and a plurality of attribute types, stored in connection with at least one computer system, wherein an attribute type can have a plurality of attributes, the attributes and the attribute types are ordered in a tree-structure hierarchy, a document can be assigned a plurality of attribute types at a same and/or different level in the hierarchy, a document can be assigned a plurality of attributes for one attribute type, the documents are stored in a first data storage, the attributes are stored in a second data storage, and the first data storage

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and the second data storage are logically separate and different, said computer program

product comprising:

(A)   at least one computer readable medium, readable by the at least one

computer system;

~~(B)~~   instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for

providing a group of a plurality of documents including at least one document;

~~(B)~~(C) instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for

~~providing at least one attribute type, having a plurality of attributes including at least one~~

~~attribute~~selecting a plurality of attributes to be associated with the at least one document;

and

~~(C)   instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for~~

~~providing at least one document;~~

(D)   instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for

each of the selected attributes, for automatically tagging, in the first data storage, the

documents in the group including ~~for associating~~ the at least one document, with ~~the at~~

~~least one~~each selected attribute ~~, and determining at least one reference corresponding to~~

~~the at least one document~~and with all attributes of all ancestors in the hierarchy of each

selected attribute; ~~(E) instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable~~

~~medium, for associating at least one other document with the at least one attribute and~~

~~determining at least one other reference corresponding to the at least one other document;~~

and ~~(F) instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for~~storing,

in the second data storage, respective references ~~the at least one reference and the at least~~

~~one other reference~~in association with ~~the at least one~~each selected attribute and the

ancestor attributes, for later retrieval of ~~at least one of the at least one document and the~~

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~~at least one other document~~ individual documents in the group, the respective references

uniquely indicating respective individual documents in the first data storage;

(G)(E)   wherein the at least one document and the at least one other document are

representative of at least one of: an invention disclosure document, a patent document, a

trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a contract

document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration

document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document,

____   wherein a document is a data record including a plurality of fields,

____   wherein the attribute and the attribute type can be different from the fields in the

document and contents of the fields.

31. (Currently amended)   The computer program product of claim 30, ~~further~~

~~comprising instructions, provided on the at least one computer-readable-medium, for~~

~~determining at least one~~ wherein providing the group of documents includes selecting the

documents included in the group of documents responsive to a user, ~~the group including~~

~~the at least one document,~~ wherein the group of documents omits a lapsed document.

32. (Currently amended)   The computer program product of claim 30, further

comprising instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for

searching

the second data storage for ~~the at least one document~~ documents based on criteria

including at least one of the ~~at least one attribute~~ attributes and ~~the at least one~~ a

corresponding attribute type, using the respective references in the second data storage to

locate the documents in the first data storage.

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33. (Currently amended)   The computer program product of claim 30, wherein the ~~at least one attribute is~~ attributes are selected from a plurality of attribute types representative of at least one of: a product and a service.

34. (Canceled)

35. (Currently amended)   The computer program product of claim 30, further comprising instructions, provided on the at least one computer readable medium, for utilizing the ~~at least one attribute~~ attributes as criteria for at least one of searching, retrieving, reporting, and viewing the at least one document.

36. (Currently amended)   The computer program product of claim 35, wherein the ~~at least one attribute is~~ attributes can be utilized in combination ~~with at least one of~~: (i) ~~the~~ at least one ~~of the~~ attribute ~~type~~ types, (ii) at least one sub-type of the at least one attribute type, (iii) a content of at least one field in the at least one document; (iv) a type of at least one field in the at least one document; and (vi) information derived from the at least one field in the at least one document.

37. (Currently amended)   The computer program product of claim 30, wherein the ~~at least one reference corresponds~~ respective references correspond to the serial ~~number~~ numbers of the ~~at least one document~~ respective documents.

38. (Currently amended)   A system, implemented on at least one computer, for managing a plurality of attributes in association with a plurality of electronic documents and a plurality of attribute types, where an attribute type can have a plurality of attributes, the attributes and the attribute types are ordered in a tree-structure hierarchy, a document can be assigned a plurality of attribute types at a same and/or different level in the hierarchy, a document can be assigned a plurality of attributes for one attribute type, the documents are stored in a first data storage, the attributes are stored in a second data

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storage, and the first data storage and the second data storage are logically separate and

different, said system comprising:

    (A)   means, in the at least one computer, for providing a group of a plurality of

documents including at least one document;

    (B)   means, in the at least one computer, for ~~providing at least one attribute~~

~~type, having a plurality of attributes including at least one attribute~~selecting a plurality of

attributes to be associated with the at least one document; and

    ~~(B)~~   ~~means, in the at least one computer, for providing at least one document;~~

    (C)   means, in the at least one computer, for each of the selected attributes, for

~~associating~~automatically tagging, in the first data storage, the documents in the group

including the at least one document, with ~~the at least one~~each selected attribute and with

all attributes of all ancestors in the hierarchy of each selected attribute, ~~and determining~~

~~at least one reference corresponding to the at least one document; (D) means, in the at~~

~~least one computer, for associating at least one other document with the at least one~~

~~attribute and determining at least one other reference corresponding to the at least one~~

~~other document;~~ and ~~(E) means, in the at least one computer, for~~ storing, in the second

data storage, respective references ~~the at least one reference and the at least one other~~

~~reference~~in association with ~~the at least one~~each selected attribute and the ancestor

attributes, for later retrieval of ~~at least one of the at least one document and the at least~~

~~one other document~~individual documents in the group, the respective references uniquely

indicating respective individual documents in the first data storage;

    ~~(F)~~(D)   wherein the at least one document and the at least one other document are

representative of at least one of: an invention disclosure document, a patent document, a

trademark document, a copyright document, a product description document, a contract

document, a license document, a sui generis protection document, a design registration

document, a trade secret document, and an opinion document,

<u>wherein a document is a data record including a plurality of fields.</u>

<u>wherein the attribute and the attribute type can be different from the fields in the</u>

<u>document and contents of the fields.</u>

39. (Currently amended)   The system of claim 38, ~~further comprising means, in the at~~

~~least one computer, for determining~~ <u>wherein the means for providing the group of</u>

<u>documents includes selecting the documents included in the</u> ~~at least one~~ <u>group of</u>

documents responsive to a user, ~~the group including the at least one document, wherein~~

~~the group of documents omits a lapsed document.~~

40. (Currently amended)   The system of claim 38, further comprising means, in the at

least one computer, for searching <u>the second data storage</u> for ~~the at least one~~

~~document~~<u>documents</u> based on criteria including at least one of the ~~at least one~~

~~attribute~~<u>attributes</u> and ~~the at least one~~ <u>a corresponding</u> attribute type<u>, and using the</u>

<u>respective references in the second data storage to locate the documents in the first data</u>

<u>storage.</u>

41. (Currently amended)   The system of claim 38, wherein the ~~at least one attribute is~~

<u>attributes are</u> selected from a plurality of attribute types representative of at least one of: a

product and a service.

42. (Canceled)

43. (Currently amended)   The system of claim 38, further comprising utilizing the ~~at~~

~~least one attribute~~<u>attributes</u> as criteria for at least one of searching, retrieving, reporting,

and viewing the at least one document.

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44. (Currently amended)   The ~~method~~ system of claim 43, wherein the ~~at least one~~ ~~attribute is~~attributes are utilized in combination with ~~at least one of~~: (i) the ~~at least one~~ attribute ~~type~~types, (ii) at least one sub-type of the at least one attribute type, (iii) a content of at least one field in the at least one document; (iv) a type of at least one field in the at least one document; and (vi) information derived from the at least one field in the at least one document.

45. (Currently amended)   The system of claim 38, wherein the ~~at least one reference~~ ~~corresponds~~respective references correspond to the serial ~~number~~numbers of the ~~at least~~ ~~one document~~respective documents.

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